

DECISION RECORD AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

EA# NM-060-2001-0131

Right-of-Way NM 105282

Recommendation: I recommend that the proposed action by Southwestern Public Service Company for installation of an overhead electric distribution line be approved as mitigated, subject to the Standard Stipulations for Overhead Electric Distribution Lines in the Roswell District, BLM. This action will affect the following public lands:

New Mexico Principal Meridian

T. 14 S., R 28 E. N.M.P.M.

Section 27: NW1/4NW1/4.

T. 15 S., R. 28 E., N.M.P.M.

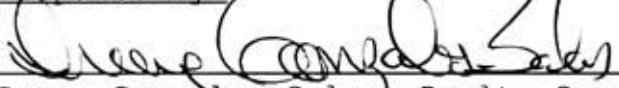
Section 3: Lot 4, SW1/4NW1/4, SW1/4SW1/4;

Section 10: N1/2NW1/4, SW1/4SW1/4.

Authority of this action is the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

Rationale for recommendation: The proposed action would not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation. Portions of the subject lands and adjacent lands have been used for similar purposes and all present and potential uses and users have been considered.

Prepared by:

  
Irene Gonzales-Salas, Realty Specialist

7-18-01

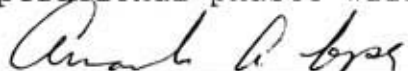
Date

Decision: The recommendation and rationale are adopted as my decision.

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.

Compliance and Monitoring

The construction phase of this proposed action and subsequent operational phases will be monitored as per regulation.

  
Larry D. Bray  
Assistant Field Manager  
Lands and Minerals

7/18/01

Date

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ROSWELL FIELD OFFICE  
ROSWELL, NM 88201

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
EA# NM-060-2001-0131  
Right-of-Way NM 105282

Applicant: Southwestern Public Service Company  
P. O. Box 1937  
Roswell, NM 88202-1937

Location: T. 14 S., R. 27 E., N.M.P.M.  
Section 24: W1/2W1/2;  
Section 25: NW1/4NW1/4.

Preparer: Irene Gonzales-Salas

July 13, 2001

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed electric facilities will be used primarily to supply the oil and gas industry with power for the development of oil and gas resources. The power line will supply electric service to Yates Corporation projects.

B. Conformance with Land Use Plan

The Roswell Resource Area Management Plan (RMP) was approved in October of 1997. The proposed action is in accordance with this plan and is consistent with Bureau of Policy and guidance.

C. Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans

The proposed action does not conflict with any known State or Local planning or zoning ordinance. The authority for this action is the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action

On May 1, 2001, Southwestern Public Service filed a completed application for an overhead electric distribution line southeast of Roswell, New Mexico. The application was completed on upon receipt of the archeology report received on

May 1, 2001. The proposed electric distribution line would be used primarily to supply the oil and gas industry with power for the development of oil and gas resources. This proposed 7.2/12.47 electric distribution line will utilize 40 and 45 foot poles spaced at a distance of approximately 370 feet.

An auger would be used to drill the holes for the power poles. The poles would be set in the holes with a hoist and the holes would be backfilled. Subsequently, transformers would be installed, lines strung and the power line energized. The power line would be a cross arm triangular design and raptor proof in accordance with the Roswell RMP standard stipulations for overhead power lines.

Total length of the right-of-way would be 20,606.2 feet with 9,593.4 feet located on public land (6.607 acres and 1.817 miles).

The proposed action is in Chaves County, New Mexico. The legal land description is:

T. 14 S., R 28 E. N.M.P.M.

Section 27: NW1/4NW1/4.

T. 15 S., R. 28 E., N.M.P.M.

Section 3: Lot 4, SW1/4NW1/4, SW1/4SW1/4;

Section 10: N1/2NW1/4, SW1/4SW1/4.

A field examination was conducted by Irene Gonzales-Salas.

## B. Alternatives

### 1. No Action

Under this alternative the application would be rejected.

### 2. Change the Alignment--Reroute the Project

There are no alternate routes which would have significantly less environmental impacts or any clear advantages over the proposed action. Therefore the alternative of changing the location of the project is not analyzed further.

## III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

General Setting. The proposed action is located southeast of Roswell.

Both the surface and mineral estates are in public ownership. An inspection of the Master Title Plats revealed the following title information.

Rights-of-Way of record - NM 0116521, NM 16897, LC 025595, NM 53837, NM 72718, NM 70505.

Affected Resources. The following critical elements have been evaluated and are either not present or are not affected by the proposed action or the alternatives in this EA.

- Air Quality
- Archaeology (01-R-042-A)
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)
- Farm Lands (Prime and Unique)
- Floodplains
- Native American Religious Concerns
- Threatened or Endangered (T&E) Species (plant & animal)
- Wastes, Hazardous and/or Solid
- Water Quality, Drinking and Ground
- Wetlands and Riparian Zones
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wilderness

The impact of the proposed action and alternatives to minority or low-income populations or communities has been considered and no significant impact is anticipated.

A. Soils

The soils belong to the Roswell Faskin Jalmar complex. The soils consist of 60 percent Roswell fine sand, 25 percent Jalmar fine sand and 15 percent less extensive soils. Permeability is rapid. Runoff is very slow, and the hazard of water erosion is slight. The hazard of soil blowing is severe.

B. Vegetation

The native vegetation is mainly sand dropseed, little bluestem, sand bluestem, three-awn, sandbur, shinnery oak, sand sagebrush, and yucca.

C. Range

The proposed project is located within the following grazing allotment:

Allotment #65075  
Bogle Farms, Inc.

D. Wildlife

Wildlife species utilizing this habitat include mule deer, pronghorn antelope, dove, quail, Northern harrier, coyote, foxes, rabbits, kangaroo rats, pocket gophers, prairie rattlesnakes, as well as a variety of raptors.

E. VRM/Recreation

The subject lands are within a Class IV VRM area. The proposed project is located in an area where numerous oil and gas activities are ongoing.

Recreational use is varied from severely limited to nonexistent. The small amount of recreational use in the proposed project area primarily involves seasonal hunting activities. Animals hunted include mule deer, pronghorn antelope, dove, quail, coyote and rabbit.

IV. Environmental Impacts

Impacts of the Proposed Action. Impacts from the proposed action are minimal and short-term in nature. Temporary soil and vegetative disruption would occur during installation of the power line. Removal of vegetation along the right-of-way will not take place. However, some soil loss will occur from soil blowing winds, as a natural result from exposing of the soils during installation of the power poles. Some vegetation would be crushed by vehicles during installation/maintenance activities. A reduction in AUMs would not occur.

Noxious weeds affect both crops and native plant species in the same way - by out-competing for light, water, and soil nutrients. Noxious weeds cause estimated crop losses of \$2 to \$3 billion annually. These losses are attributed to: (1) Decreased quality of agricultural products due to high levels of competition from noxious weeds; and (2) decreased quantity of agricultural products due to noxious weed infestations.

Further, noxious weeds can negatively affect livestock and dairy producers by making forage unpalatable to livestock, thus decreasing livestock productivity and potentially increasing producers' feed costs. Increased cost to producers are eventually borne by consumers.

Infestations of noxious weeds can have a potentially disastrous

impact on biodiversity and natural ecosystems. In order to combat the negative effects of noxious weeds on crop lands, grazing lands and waterways, herbicidal and other weed control strategies can be implemented at further costs to producers and government agencies. Such costs would then likely be passed down to consumers, who would pay more for products due to increased producer costs.

Impacts from the proposed construction activity may cause temporary disruption of wildlife activity within the immediate vicinity of the project area. More mobile species such as small mammals and birds would temporarily leave the site during actual construction/maintenance activities but should return in a short period of time.

Visual resources would not be significantly affected. The proposed right-of-way would have minimal to no impact on the current recreational uses of the area.

#### Impacts of the Alternatives.

1. The "No Action" alternative denies the application. This alternative would result in no environmental impacts; however, there would be adverse economic impacts to the applicant. Electric service would not be provided to the applicant and the third party (Yates). There have been no significant or unmitigatable impacts identified which would warrant selection of this alternative.

#### Mitigating Measures

The applicant will be required to comply with the Roswell District Standard Stipulations for Overhead Electric Distribution Lines as directed in the proposed RMP.

#### Residual Impacts

The lands along the proposed route have already been disturbed by power line, roads and pipelines. It is anticipated that the lands along the proposed route as well as adjacent lands, will continue to be used for a variety of right-of-way facilities, therefore, the cumulative effects of the project on the identified resources and existing rights-of-way are not significant.

#### V. Consultation and Coordination

The comments and suggestions expressed during the consultation have been incorporated into this EA.